

trade. The principal objects of the journey were the building of Fort Yukon, and the opening up of trade with the tribes of the Yukon country. This brought the H. B. men into what was then Russian territory, and into competition and possible conflict with the Russian-American Company—as to which Murray has a good deal to say. That the Russians did not, as Murray evidently expected, attempt to drive him back on to British territory, may have been due, to some extent, to the fact that the Russian-American Company was on the point of arranging with the Hudson's Bay Company a renewal of the profitable Agreement of February 6, 1839. It was probably, however, primarily due to the uncertainty on the part of the Russians as to the new fort being on Russian or British territory. On the other hand, Murray was perfectly aware, and so admits frankly in his narrative, that he was building on Russian territory. The explanation of this geographical ignorance on the one side, and knowledge on the other, is simply this: the Russians, as will presently appear, had never been as far up the river as the mouth of the Porcupine, and consequently had only the vague reports of natives to guide them; while Murray had not only explored the ground, from the opposite direction, but, having the benefit of Sir John Franklin's observations for longitude on the Mackenzie, was able to take that as a base and reach at least an approximate estimate as to the position of the boundary. As will be seen in his narrative, he was somewhat out in his calculations. Still, there was no manner of doubt as to the mouth of the Porcupine being well within Russian territory. Murray seems to have deliberately invaded the ground of his rivals, though he had no shadow of right to either build or carry on trade west of the boundary. It was all in the game of the fur trade, and that game was a rough-and-tumble affair at the best. It is possible, though improbable, that Murray was not aware of the terms of the Agreement of 1839, expressly prohibiting such an establishment. The second article of that Agreement (repeated word for word in the renewal of 1849) reads: It is further agreed that the Hudson's Bay Company shall not trade with the Indians nor receive in trade or barter nor hunt any furs or peltries on any part of the Russian territory on the northwest coast or islands than that ceded to them under the provisions of the foregoing article.'